

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 AID-05 IGA-01 L-02 EUR-12 IO-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5020

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 0405

DEPT PASS AID WASHDC FOR AID/YEMEN REP RUIZ

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PROP, ALIB, SCUL, PFOR, YE, US

SUBJECT: CLOSING OF FOREIGN CULTURAL CENTERS-IMPACT ON USIS

1. ON FEB 15, PAO NUGENT WAS PASSED COPY DRAFT LETTER FROM IPA DEAN GHALIB TO FONMIN AL-ASNAG STATING THAT IPA, BRITISH COUNCIL AND USIS WILLING DISCUSS POSSIBILITIES COORDINATION AND ASKING FONMIN TO OFFICIALLY REQUEST US AND UK EMBASSIES PARTICIPATE WITH IPA IN OVERALL REVIEW OF IPA, COUNCIL AND USIS OBJECTIVES, PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES, TO IDENTIFY POSSIBLE AREAS COOPERATIVE ACTION. LETTER HAD BEEN DRAFTED BY UN/IPA ADVISORY TEAM LEADER ROBERTS.

2. AFTER DISCUSSING LETTER WITH BRITISH COUNCIL REP SMITH, NUGENT MET GHALIB AND ROBERTS FEB 16 AND STATED THAT, ALTHOUGH HE STILL WILLING PARTICIPATE IN PROGRAM REVIEW WITH GHALIB, IT WAS INADVISABLE HAVE REVIEW INITIATED VIA FORMAL FONMIN NOTE. HE ARGUED THAT FONMIN NOTE INADVISABLE BECAUSE (A) IT WOULD PLACE DISCUSSIONS ON VERY FORMAL FOOTING, RENDERING THEM CUMBERSOME AND NOT CONDUCTIVE TO FRANK EXCHANGE IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS, (B) SINCE FONMIN AL-ASNAG'S ORIGINAL SUGGESTION TO GHALIB THAT USIS, COUNCIL AND IPA DISCUSS POSSIBILITIES COOPERATION HAD BEEN VERBAL, IT UNLIKELY ASNAG WISHED DISCUSSIONS THEMSELVES PROCEED ON FORMAL BASIS, AND (C) IF DISCUSSIONS WERE FORMAL, THEIR CONTENT WOULD PROBABLY GET BACK TO ARAB GOVERNMENTS

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WITH WHOM YARG TRYING TO AVOID DIPLOMATIC FLAP, AND WHOLE

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE (IE, KEEPING COUNCIL AND USIS IN OPERATION WITHOUT RAISING OBJECTIONS FROM ARAB GOVERNMENTS WHOSE CULTURAL CENTERS BEING CLOSED) WOULD THEREBY BE THWARTED. WITH SMITH'S PRIOR CONCURRENCE, NUGENT STATED THIS POSITION ESSENTIALLY REPRESENTED COUNCIL'S VIEWPOINT, AS WELL AS THAT OF USIS.

3. DESPITE ROBERTS' OBJECTION THAT FORMAL ROUTE WOULD BETTER PROTECT GHALIB'S BUREAUCRATIC POSITION, GHALIB CONCURRED IN NUGENT'S ARGUMENT AND AGREED PROCEED WITH DISCUSSIONS ON INFORMAL BASIS. TO KEEP ASNAG INFORMED OF THEIR PROGRESS WITHOUT DISRUPTING THEIR CONFIDENTIALITY, HOWEVER, HE SUGGESTED THAT ACTING HEAD POLITICAL SECTION OF FONMIN, MUHAMMAD ABDULLA AL-WAZIR, SIT IN. SINCE AL-WAZIR GENERALLY DISCREET AND CONSISTENTLY HELPFUL TO BOTH COUNCIL AND USIS, NUGENT CONCURRED.

4. SINCE NUGENT IN TAIZ FEB 17-20, GHALIB AGREED MEET AGAIN WITH HIM AND SMITH O/A FEB 24.
SCOTES

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